Ball State Outdoor Pursuits Belay Program

Our belay program exists to provide patrons with a safe and easily accessible climbing area. It is safe because all belayers are tested by BSU OP Climbing Staff and held to the same standard that we hold for our staff. The climbing area is easily accessible to patrons because climbers are able to belay for one another once they have passed the belay test. Patrons are not to depend on the Climbing Wall Staff every time a belay is necessary. The progression in the belay program is as follows:

- **Patron comes to the facility to climb**
  Each participant is allowed to utilize the Climbing Staff for a belay for your first 3 free visits to the Climbing Wall. This gives patrons the opportunity to see if climbing membership is something they wish to peruse. It also keeps the wall staff free to monitor the whole facility instead of constantly belaying. After their free trial climbs, patrons are strongly suggested to attend a belay clinic and become belay qualified. If the patron happens to already know how to belay using the B-U-S system, they can take the advanced belay test. (See belay test below)

- **Signing up for a Belay Clinic**
  Belay clinic sign-ups are at the Climbing Wall desk. The cost of each belay clinic is $15.00, payable upon signing up, and last approximately 2 hours. Each clinic will have between 2-6 people. If there are not at least two, the class will be rescheduled. Class limit is set at six to allow for enough one on one time between instructor and participants.

- **Belay Clinic**
  Each belay clinic will be taught by a staff member who has thorough knowledge of belaying and of the equipment involved. The clinics are about two hours long. This enables the participant to learn all the necessary information, and also have a chance to apply and practice the new skills. Participants will be taught how to put on a harness, appropriate knots, how to use an ATC, correct B-U-S belay technique, climbing/belaying command, and other pertinent information relating to climbing as well as policies and procedures of our Climbing Wall.

- **Belay Test**
  After taking a clinic, participants may take their belay test within a two week period. Participants have up to two weeks to take their test. After this point they can try to take the advanced test, or they must retake the clinic. BSU staff will administer all belay tests, and reserve the right to make the ultimate decision on whether the person passes or fails the test. In order to pass the test a participant must be able to successfully tie into the climber’s position of the belay system, correctly set up the belayer position and exhibit correct belay technique, without prompting by the instructor. They must also show a certain degree of awareness regarding their climbing partners status throughout the belay process (e.g. whether their climber’s equipment is on properly, if they are tied in correctly, and also maintain communication throughout the process). After this process the Climbing Staff administering the test has the final call of whether the person passes. Again, this is not to be arbitrary the only reason a participant should not pass is if they show lack of judgment or disregard towards an
important part of the procedure. If a person does fail the test they have the option of returning the next day to retake the test. If the person fails the test a second time, it will be recommended that they retake the clinic without fee. Most people fail due to that they simply needed more practice. If possible, the Climbing Wall staff administering the test should take a few minutes to talk with the person to find out if they can clear up any questions or give a few tips to help out a person struggling with belaying.

- **Advanced Belay Test**
  Two different groups of people will be taking the belay test, those who have taken clinics through BSU, and those who want to test without taking a clinic. If a patron wants to test without taking a clinic, they can take the advanced test, which has a higher standard, the idea being that the person should know what’s going on and therefore perform very well. To pass, the participant must be almost perfect. Any mistakes can cause for failure. If someone fails the advanced test, they need to take our clinic, before retaking the test. * Instructors have the right to tell people to take the clinic if they feel that they do not have enough experience to pass an advanced test.

- **Beginner Belayer**
  After passing the belay test, the participant is now a beginner belayer, and receives a belay card. Every time they come to the wall they must swipe-in, tell staff that they are there to receive a punch, and wait to be recorded in the computer. This allows staff to monitor beginners more closely. Beginner climber must keep all their attention on the climber and ALWAYS keep proper belay technique. After, they are finished the Climbing Wall Staff who watched them belay, initials, and dates their belay card if they belayed well and responsibly. Otherwise, the belayer will not receive their punch. If this happens the Climbing Wall Staff should tell the belayer why they are not receiving their stamp, and should offer constructive criticism to better their belay technique. After 6 stamps the belayer becomes a qualified belayer.

- **Qualified Belayer**
  Once a climber receives their qualified belayer status they do not need to be monitored as closely as a beginner belayer. Qualified belayers are still required to swipe-in and wait until they are recorded in the computer. Belayers can lose their qualified status for showing lack of skill or judgment in belaying. They will return to beginner status and have to repeat the six punch process.